

Council guidance on Pubs, Beer Gardens and Open Space to avoid noise nuisance

The Coronavirus epidemic has had a major impact in many areas of commercial activity but none more so than restrictions on the entertainment industry including public houses.

This guidance is aimed at assisting licensed premises in minimising noise issues as they prepare to re-open. The council's Environmental Protection Team and Licensing Team are keen to support licensed premises and to give advice on methods to minimise noise impact on residents. However they also have a duty to protect neighbouring residents from unacceptable noise. Operators of licensed premises need to be mindful that they may have residents living near to them who have to get up early for work or who have to stay at home as they are shielding. This is particularly important when outside areas are being used and where doors and windows are being left open to help ventilation.

Licensed premises are advised to develop a Noise Management Plan (NMP) in addition to the Risk Assessment for protecting residents and staff using the facilities. The noise management plan should look at issues such as:

- Times of operation of outdoor space. The times of operation of beer gardens and outside areas should be considerate of the potential for nuisance. Each premises is different and what may work for one pub may not work for another. In residential areas an outside space may need to be closed earlier in order to avoid noise problems and complaints.
- Staff training and procedures for dealing with noise issues.
- Supervision and management of customers outside to prevent excessive noise.
- Use of signage in outdoor spaces
- Communication with residents – leaflet dropping and provision of an emergency contact number should issues arise.
- Restrictions on outdoor entertainment such as music. Live music, karaoke and DJ's outside should be avoided. Any music being played outside should be kept at background levels only.
- Lighting issues – any lights outside should not cause excessive illumination or glare to residents. Lights should be mains operated as generators could cause noise issues.
- Flexibility – issues may arise that could cause disturbances so it is imperative that NMP's are flexible enough to incorporate rapid change and develop with experience and the practicalities that become apparent in operation.

If complaints are received to either the Environmental Protection Team or Licensing Team about noise from a licensed premises, they will be followed up. Licencees will be contacted to

discuss the complaint and what could be done to reduce noise levels. While every effort will be made to find an agreeable solution this may include the need to reduce the use of the outside space or activities taking place within it. Ultimately, if it is necessary, formal action in the form of a license review or service of an abatement notice could be taken.

If you own or manage a licensed premises and are considering using the open space differently from how you operated prior to the lockdown please use the guidance above to consider the potential impact on neighbours. If you have done this and would like further help, please contact the Environmental Health Admin Team

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